

State Technical Committee Meeting Minutes

6/4/15

In House: Craig Derickson – NRCS, Kevin Wickey – NRCS, Eric Zach – NGPC, Kent Zimmerman – DNR, Paul Jasa – UNL, Rod Christen – NGLC, Burdette Piening – Producer, Jason Skold – TNC, Steve Roth – NDA, Bill Armbrust – FSA, Elbert Traylor – NDEQ, Martin Massengale – UNL, John DuPlissis – UNL, Marcia Trompke – CNPP, Greg Reisdorff – FSA, Wally Valasek – SWCS, Carla McCullough – NDEQ, Rich Torpin – NRCS, Julie Crew – NRCS, John Mayberger – NRCS, Jamie Petersen – NRCS, Tami Nordman – NRCS, Brad Soncksen – NRCS, Renee Hancock – NRCS, Neil Dominy – NRCS, Kelly Klenke – NRCS, Kelsi Wehrman – PF, Greg Whitmore – NeCGA, Barth Crouch – PLJV, Heather Duncan – USEPA-Region 7, Kristen Hassebrook – NE Cattlemen, Ansely Mick – Adrian Smith’s Office, Lavaine Moore – FSA,

On Phone: Jason Moudry – LLNRD, Ryan Broker – Ben Sasse’s Office

Welcome and Introductions – Craig Derickson

Craig introduced Kevin Wickey, Central Regional Conservationist, who is visiting Nebraska from headquarters.

Kevin Wickey – Three big topics for my visit this week:

1. Transformation
2. Conservation Planning – reemphasizing the importance on local and private lands which is on-going now
3. Why are you important on Natural Resources for Nebraska? Setting priorities to achieve the greatest outcome. Encourage you all on this great impact to hear your voice

Craig Derickson – SRA

- It’s a budget and performance planning process
- big change for NRCS and we are able to be more proactive
- June/July each state is going through this exercise
- trees/forestry land uses and resource concerns

Kelly Klenke – SRA

- 9 major resource concerns
 - Each can be analyzed in its entirety
 - We have extensive data sets in Nebraska
 - Assess Spatial and Trends
 - SSURGO Database (NASS)
 - Agricultural Census
 - Using data for analysis
 - Can look at it in ANY level
 - Ex. Water Quality Degradation and Cropland all in one view
 - NASS Data Layer
 - Crops, high nitrate wells, medium/large CAFO Operations, 303 TMDL Stream for Nutrients
 - This does determine indicators of an issue or the extent of an issue
 - Helps us to determine which practices that impact Water Quality Degradation

- This process is ever/always evolving
- Always looking for input/data - Let Kelly know at 402.437.4022 or by email at Kelly.klenke@ne.usda.gov
- This presentation is on our website located at: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/ne/technical/stc/>



?? (Question) – Ranking ways, will this change?

- Craig D. – Only if a particular area needs more impacts, it's our goal to optimize our major resource areas

Brad Soncksen – CSP Updates

- This presentation is on our website located at: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/ne/technical/stc/>
- Nebraska is 1st in Acres
- Nebraska is 3rd in Financial Obligation
- Nebraska is 1st in Certified Organic Treated Acres
- 2015 Signup is underway
 - Fun all would take \$11 Million
- Goal to put 5% into Farmers/Ranchers
- 493 renewal applications on approximately 1 million acres of ACEP
 - Agland Easements (AE) – two applications
 - Wetland Reserve Easements (WRE) – 38 applications

Brad Soncksen – RCPP Updates

- New Partnership Program
- 2014 was the 1st year
- 40% Projects
- 35% State
- 25%
- 
 Funding level dictates which pool
- State Fund Pool – 5 year project, 2015-2019, cutoff is June 19, 2015
- Nation Fund Pool – 5 year project, 2015-2019, \$885,000 allocated
- EQIP Cropland Fund Pool
- EQIP Grassland Fund Pool
- 
 By administrative area; East, West, and Central
- Ogallala Initiative – 7 proposals from NRD's only 3 were approved for 2015

Renee Hancock – AFO Updates

- After February 2015
 - FA for new AFO not allowed
 - FA expanding AFO allowed, no % restriction

?? (Question) – Concerned with CNMP preliminary?

Renee H. – TSP's are aware and we have been working with them

?? (Question) – Transfer, the more manure on more acres is always better

Renee H. – Contract period is when the manure need to be handled since it's a resource which need to be utilized appropriately

?? (Question) – This could limit the resource?

Renee H. – We can discuss at the next EQIP meeting and always hearing more of these concerns is the best to resolve any issues.

Neil Dominy, NRCS – Soil Health Initiative, what it can look like

- What do you think of when you hear the word soil?
 - Worms
 - Nutrients
 - Organic Matter
 - Top Soil
 - Biological Activity
- We need to also remember the Water Quality
- We have a variety of soils
- Soil Health Hubs
 - Show casework with farmers/ranchers
 - Possibly on in each NRD to provide local education forums
 - Producer peer to peer
- Soliciting feedback over the next two weeks, then possibly meet as a group to discuss
- Meeting with Stakeholders
- Inventory of Soil Health Activities

From All in the room

?? (Question) – Enjoyed this presentation and nice to know it's not all farmland but also grazing! Soil Health is an excellent way to go!

Neil D. – Thank you! It is about both Farmland and Grazingland/Rangeland

Neil Dominy, NRCS – Client Gateway

- Can request technical assistance and financial assistance on-line
- Four producers have tested this across Nebraska
- This saves the producer/rancher time and money
- More information on Client Gateway is on our website located at:
<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/ne/technical/stc/>

Greg Reisdorff, FSA – CRP Update

- This presentation is on our website located at:
<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/ne/technical/stc/>
- 32 million to 28 million acres
- 2007 – 1.3 million acres
- Nebraska enrollment of 797,998 acres
- CRP Transition Incentive Program (TIP) is still ongoing
 - Nebraska has 1 million allocated
 - Enrollment available for CRP expires on 9.30.15
- 30th Anniversary of CRP – Birthday Party Ideas???? – let us know
- Eligible existing contracts granted an option for 1 year extension
- Soil Rental Rates updated June 1, 2015 (+ 10% due to them being on for 10 year)
 - 321 is the highest Nebraska rental rate located in Dakota County

Greg Reisdorff, FSA – Wildlife

- Request for additional acres for Greater Prairie Chicken and Upland Game Birds
 - Proposed multi-state SAFE for Migratory Birds, Butterflies, and Pollinators for Kansas and Nebraska
 - Milkweed is a must for Butterflies when it comes to survival
- SAFE Benefits
 - 50% of costs on Cost Share
 - 40% Practice Incentive Payments

?? (Question) – 10 or 15 year contract for unbroken native tallgrass?

Greg R. – Yes.

?? (Question) – *We rarely see greater prairie chickens in the grazingland/rangelands.*

Eric Zach – They do need the taller grass for nesting and for the chicks to feed on. The right management can see big benefits, refer to the CRP2 handbook for best management practices. The seedings are mainly grass then forb based. We are requesting more acres now or we have to wait a year.

Greg Reisdorff – New Multi-State SAFE

- CRP benefits, same contract length 10-15 years
- Rental Rates for county will be competitive reverse auction
 - Producer could offer a rental rate to put land in
 - No more than 75% of offers accepted
 - This will still need to be approved
 - Signing incentive of \$100 an acre
 - Trees not eligible
 - Eligible size of acres is 160 max. and 2 min.
 - Contract Program, more of a short term

Barth Crouch, Playa Lakes Joint Venture (PLJV) – CRP 550,000 acres down from what Nebraska use to have. Kansas has approved the new initiative. FSA State Review is June 16 & 17, 2015. Positive recommendation sent to CEPD (headquarters) by June 17, 2015.

?? (Question) – *Grass in quaternary acres to compete with expired acres, we can't compete.*

Greg R. – There is an opportunity for further grazing management. We use high intensity short term grazing. Grazing is a very viable management tool, CRP needs it as much as the cow.

?? (Question) – *Concern on the investment into CRP.*

**** Soil Health, Notill.org – see website for upcoming expos/tours/field days ****